

# Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Children with Disabilities

## Presentation by:

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# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Barriers and Challenges

BREAK

- Support Services
- Cross-Sector Collaboration

# OCASI -The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

- OCASI was formed in 1978 to act as a collective voice for immigrant serving agencies and to coordinate responses to shared needs and concerns.
- OCASI's membership is comprised of more than 200 community-based organizations in the province of Ontario.

## Mission

*The Mission of OCASI is to achieve equality, access and full participation for immigrants and refugees in every aspect of Canadian life.*

# OCASI -The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

- Main goal is to improve organizational effectiveness
  - Building/strengthening the capacity of individual
- The organization
- The sector resulting in the successful integration of newcomers in the social, political and economic life



# Accessibility Initiative

- OCASI and Ethno Racial Disability Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO) partnership formed in April 2011.
- This two year (2011 – 2013) project (funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) is representative of the collaboration of both **settlement and disability** sectors working together to reduce barriers to holistic settlement services.

Community  
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Toronto



# Changing the Lives of People with Intellectual Disabilities through Choices, Opportunities and Community Support.



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Community Living Toronto



An agency of the Government of Ontario.  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Community Living Toronto is a non-profit organization that provides a full range of personalized supports and services to over 6,000 people with an intellectual disability and their families.

**Intellectual disability** is a term used when an individual has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communication, social skills, and activities of daily living.



For over sixty years we have worked closely with families, their children, and community partners to ensure that every person with an intellectual disability has the opportunity to live as independently as possible and achieve their goals and fullest potential.



# Questions to Think About...

- What barriers might prevent a person from accessing services and/or programs at your agency before getting to your front door?
- Once at your front door, what barriers might they experience at your agency?
- How does my agency take into consideration the needs of immigrant and refugees families with children with disabilities when developing programs and services?
- What feedback mechanism do I have in place that lets me know how my clients with disabilities feel about the services they receive?

# Activity

1. What is a disability?
2. What is accessibility?
3. How is my agency accessible?

# “Problem” of Disability



## Medical Model

- Cure
- Rehabilitate
- Prevent
- Treat
- Decisions made by experts

## Social Model

- Universal design
- Accommodating environments
- Eliminating barriers
- Including voice and experiences of people with disabilities
- Promoting valued roles
- Changing society



$$A + B = AB$$

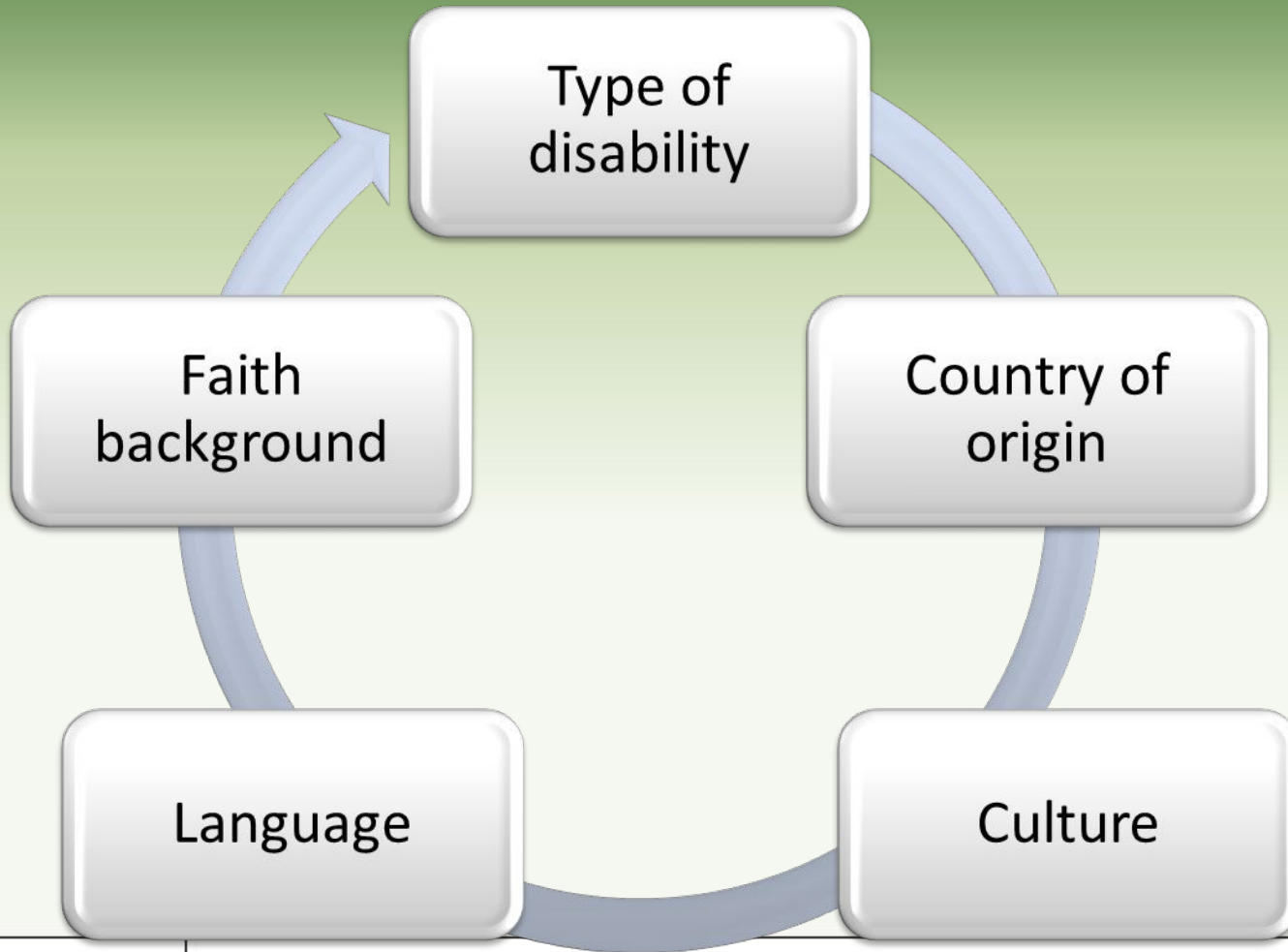
immigrant + disabilities =  
both barriers

$$A + B = AB$$

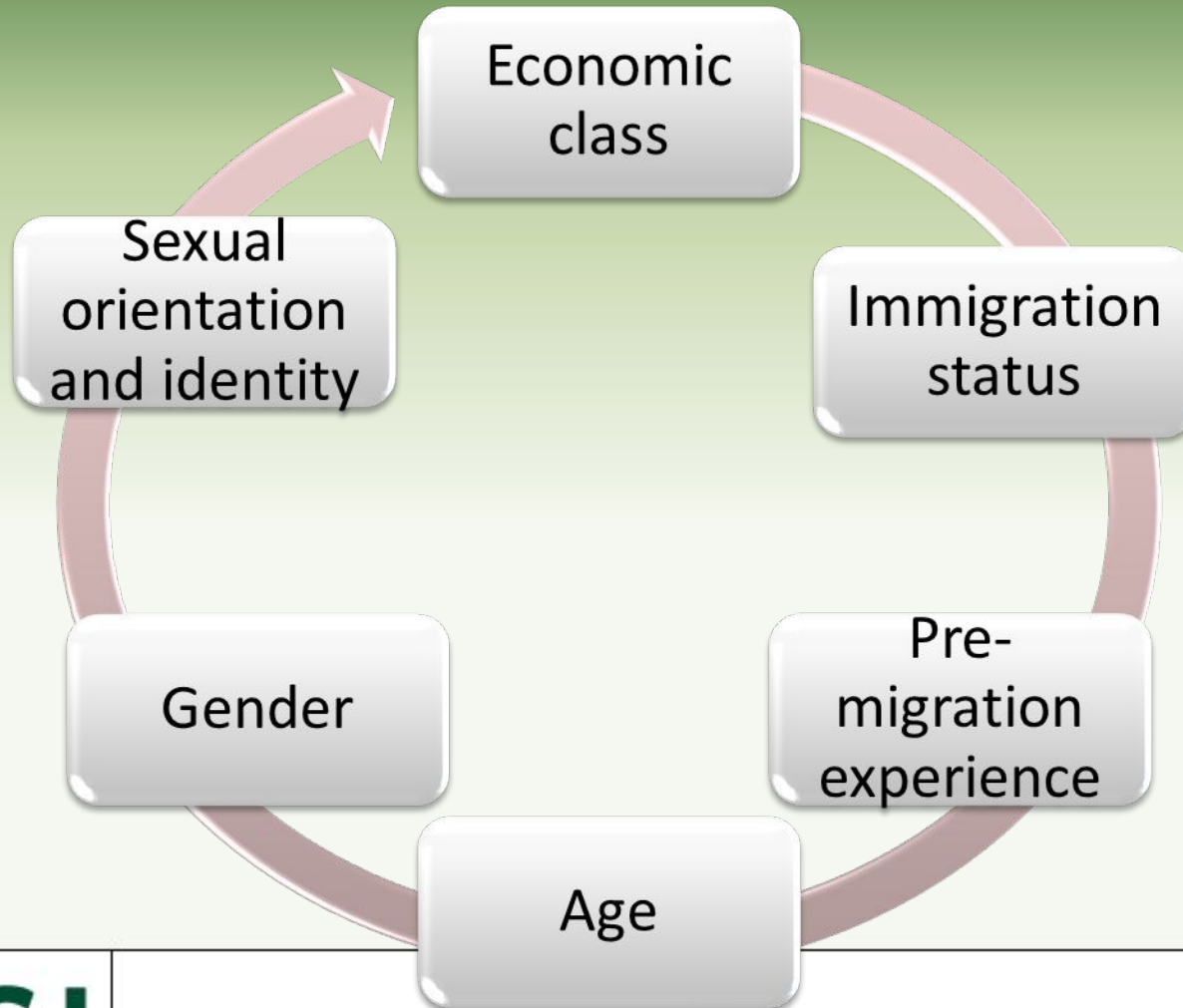
immigrants + disabilities =  
both barriers

**WRONG**

# They are Diverse!



# Diverse...



# Intersectionality

- An intersectional lens allows us to shift the center of analysis according to the speaker where all group members experience varying amounts of oppression and privilege in the system (Collins, 1990).
- Depending on the context, an individual might be an oppressor, a member of an oppressed group, or simultaneously an oppressor and oppressed (Collins, 1990; Razack, 1998).

What are some of the **barriers**  
immigrant and refugee **families** with  
children with disabilities experience in  
Canada?

# Immigrant Children And Youth With Disabilities: Some Facts

- There is little research about the experiences of immigrant and refugee families raising children with disabilities.
- The research that exists has found that:
  - Many families do not know that support exists, or how to find it.
    - Some families may be socially isolated or missing key contacts.
    - Translators and translation.
    - Cultural language –meaning of words and terms.
    - Lack of knowledge and awareness of disability related services.

# Immigrant Children And Youth With Disabilities: Some Facts

- Families who are aware of support often face barriers to access: cost, transportation, stigma, etc. In addition, they may not feel it is appropriate to question people in a position of power.
  - Families are not always aware of what services provided often entail which may lead to resistance.
- Immigration is already stressful and has an impact on physical and mental health.

# Having A Child With A Disability WITHOUT Support Adds to a Family's Stress

- Negative attitudes towards disability in their own and mainstream cultures.
  - Some cultural beliefs may lay blame for a child's disability with the parents.
  - Belief in some groups that disability is “God's will” and that it is dangerous to try to change a situation.

# Barriers To Seeking Support: Beliefs

- Little or no information readily available in primary language.
  - Lack English and/or French proficiency to seek out services.
  - Lack of support.
  - Unfamiliarity navigating the system.
- Fear that disclosing a family member's disability will jeopardize citizenship status or harm marriage prospects for other family members.
  - Canadian Immigration Act
- Difficulty moving from hope for a cure to acceptance of the disability.

# Interactive Activity

What are some of the **barriers** immigrant and refugee **children** with disabilities experience in Canada?

# Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Children And Youth with Disabilities

- Case studies

What are your initial thoughts after reading this case study? What barriers exist? What would be your next steps?

# Support Services

# Terms Confused with Intellectual Disability

- **Learning Disability:**

A person learns and understands instructions in different ways; therefore the way a teacher teaches needs to be changed or modified to accommodate the person's learning style. One example is Dyslexia.

# Terms Confused with Intellectual Disability

- **Mental Illness:**

Mental illnesses are characterized by changes in thinking, mood or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning. They can arise from a complex interaction of genetic, biological and environmental factors. Examples include depression, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia.

# Social Support is Crucial

- Four types of social support can help:
  - Instrumental
  - Structural
  - Emotional
  - Perceptive

Source: Jennings, Khanlou, & Su, 2014.



# Instrumental Support

- This is practical help:
  - financial support
  - caregiving
  - respite services

# Structural Support

- Availability of and access to information and support services for people with disabilities.
- Toronto has 37 agencies that provide supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- Not knowing about this kind of support can add the stress for parents.



# To Find Services for Children and Adults With DD:

[www.dsotoronto.ca/agencies-list](http://www.dsotoronto.ca/agencies-list)

- Community participation supports
- Family support
- Respite/caregiver support
- Person Directed Planning
- Residential services and support
- Specialized support

# Emotional Support

- Support of family, friends, and professionals.
- Many newcomers have no family here and have not yet established the social networks that can provide this kind of help.
- Importance of cultural awareness and cultural humility approach (vs 'cultural competence').

# **“Every Door is The Right Door”**

- As a service provider you are “the right door” to other services.
- Network with professionals in other sectors such as mental health and developmental disability sectors.
- 211Toronto has expanded its services to include more languages.



# Supports and Services for Children and Families



# What is available for a Newborn-6 year old child

- Childcare and early childhood programs
- Speech and language support
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Behavioural management
- Access to infant development programs
- Family counselling
- Referral and information for developmental assessments



# Who to contact for services for a Newborn-6 year old child



**city kids**  
KIDS INCLUDED IN DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORTS

(416) 920-6543

# What is available for a 6-16 year old child

- School Support
- Home Management
- Literacy
- **Respite**
- Behaviour Services
- Community Participation
- **Membership**
- [ConnectABILITY.ca](http://ConnectABILITY.ca)
- Support groups
- Person directed planning
- Camping
- Access to professional supports

# Who to contact for services for a 6-16 year old child



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CommunityLivingToronto.ca  
(647) 426-3219

# Who to contact for services for a an adult over 16



1-800-DS-ADULT

[www.dsotoronto.ca](http://www.dsotoronto.ca) [www.dsontario.ca](http://www.dsontario.ca)

# Passport Funding

PASSPORT is a program that helps adults with a developmental disability to participate in their communities, and helps caregivers take a break from their caregiving responsibilities.

Funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), the Passport program works to:

- Foster social, emotional, and community participation skills
- Promote continuing education and personal development
- Promote independence
- Provide respite to caregivers

*[www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/  
servicesupport/passport.aspx](http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/developmental/servicesupport/passport.aspx)*

# Passport Funding:

## *What Can I Use it For?*

- Art classes
- Cooking classes
- Music lessons
- Support workers
- Transportation to and from activities
- Life skill development like learning to
- ride the TTC or buy groceries
- Swimming lessons
- Day programs
- Parks and recreation programs
- Camps
- Respite

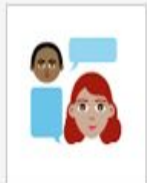


# ConnectABILITY.ca

A project of Community Living Toronto

[www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

## Kids



### Connected Families

A place to share your ideas with others on the site.



### Visuals Engine

Create visual supports using our templates and images.



### Resource Directories

An index of all of the directories listed on the site.

# Autism Spectrum Disorder: Supporting Children and Youth



## Introduction

Welcome to this training program on supporting the development of children with autism (ASD).

The course is divided into eight modules. Each of the modules was developed by a specialist with expertise in that area. Early Childhood Educators, Clinical Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Researchers worked together on program development.

# Roundtable Findings on Good/Best Practices

## Online material

- Easy and fast access
- Support people with different disabilities if they have access to a computer and internet.
- Beneficial when it is available in different languages and when the name of a contact person is provided for clients or service providers to call directly.

## Community Hubs

- Hubs allow sectors who tend to work in silos to work together to support those in need.
- Provide opportunities for people to access a variety of services in one area. This makes it a lot easier and accessible for folks who have difficulty finding services or those who depend on services such as Wheeltrans or family members to drive them around.

**Do you have any examples of  
good/best practices of cross-  
sector collaboration?**

# Collaborating with Non-Settlements Service Agencies

- OCASI and Community Living-Toronto partnership
  - While we are experts in our fields, together we share knowledge, network, and resources allowing us to better understand what is happening in the community.
  - Translated info sheets on access to early childhood services and adult developmental services to Chinese, Tamil and Farsi.
  - Co-hosted cross-sector accessibility roundtables in Toronto, London and Ottawa providing meaningful face-to-face interactions and opportunities to share resources.

# Example of Effective Cross-Sector Collaboration



Pictured: A group of IDEA participants and facilitators at CultureLink

## Intellectual Disability Education Ambassadors (IDEA) Project

A diverse group of 11 newcomers were trained to deliver outreach information about Intellectual Disability and access to DS services using their cultural knowledge, languages and community connections.

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